EURIPIDES' MEDEA

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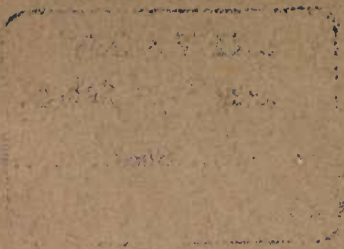

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THE

MEDEA OF EURIPIDES

LITERALLY TRANSLATED,
WITH CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY NOTES,
BY

THEODORE ALOIS BUCKLEY, B.A.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

EDWARD BROOKS, JR.

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INTRODUCTION.

AMONG the writers of Greek tragedy there are three names which stand pre-eminent. These are Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. Of these, Euripides, while probably inferior to the other two, was, nevertheless, greatly admired by his countrymen, and gained several prizes in the tragic contests.

He was born on the island of Salamis, 480 B.C., forty-five years later than Æschylus and fifteen years after Sophocles. The day of his birth was noted as being that upon which the celebrated battle of Salamis was fought and won.

Little is known of his parentage. His father was called Mnesarchus, and was probably a man of good family. That he was possessed of considerable wealth is evident from the care and expense that were bestowed upon the education of his son. His mother, Clito, was an Athenian herbseller, who had been sent away to Salamis, in company with others of her countrywomen, when Attica was given up, and the population sought refuge in the ships.

As a young man Euripides had the advantage of studying under such instructors as Prodicus, Anaxagoras and

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Protagoras. Though a brilliant scholar and a hard student, he also excelled as an athlete, and was twice victorious in the gymnastic contests of his time.

At a very early date he gave indication of those attainments which subsequently made him famous, for at the age of twenty-five he succeeded in gaining third prize in the tragic contests with one of his compositions.

His life seems not to have been a very happy one, domestic infelicity and the sarcastic allusions of his political enemy, Aristophanes, probably driving him from Athens to seek retirement in Macedonia with King Archelaus.

His death, which took place in 406 B.C., has been associated with the tragic, it being alleged that he, like a character of one of his own plays, was torn to pieces by dogs. It is probable, however, that his death occurred in the ordinary course of nature.

Euripides can hardly be said to be a true tragedian. His plays contain much that savors of the melodrama. They might end either happily or otherwise without marring or changing that which has gone before, and the tragic element is usually contributed by the introduction of some unexpected wholesale slaughter, which suggests that the poet's disposition contained more than a grain of morbid cruelty.

A translation of The Medea, one of Euripides' compositions, is contained in the following pages. The scene of the tragedy is laid in Corinth, and the plot is based upon the events which are said to have followed the mythological expedition of the Argonauts in search of the golden fleece. The *dramatis personæ* include Jason, leader of the Argonauts; Creon, King of Corinth; Ægeus, the son of Pandion; Medea, wife of Jason.

Jason, having reached the land of Colchis, where the golden fleece was carefully guarded by a terrible dragon, makes love to the king's daughter, Medea, who is an enchantress, and persuades her to assist him in his attempt to steal the coveted fleece. She administers a potion to the dragon, which enables Jason to kill it and get possession of the object of his quest.

The two lovers make their escape from Colchis by stealth, and, being subsequently married, take up their abode in Corinth.

The tragedy commences at a time when Jason, having tired of his wife, who has borne him two children, and being impelled by considerations of policy as well as by a desire to indulge a new affection, espouses a royal bride in the person of Glauce, daughter of King Creon.

The play opens with a long soliloquy by Medea's nurse, who stands at the gates of the palace and relates the wrongs and misfortunes of her mistress. In the meantime lamentations are heard issuing from within, and soon Medea appears and asks the chorus of Corinthian women to assist her, at least by their silence, if she should contrive a way to be revenged upon her husband.

King Creon then comes upon the scene, and, enraged at the attitude which Medea has taken toward the marriage of Jason with his daughter, orders her to depart forthwith from the country with her two sons. Medea pleads to be allowed to remain, saying that, though injured, she will keep silent. Creon is obdurate, but finally consents to her remaining until the next day.

Medea is then left alone with the Corinthian women, with whom she counsels as to how she may best be revenged upon those who have wronged her.

Jason next appears and reproaches his wife for her ungovernable temper. Medea answers her husband by a recital of the many sacrifices she has undergone for him, and reviles him on account of his faithless conduct towards her. Jason attempts to justify himself by showing that his marriage with Glauce was an act of policy intended to bring about the welfare of Medea and her children. Medea, however, is not persuaded, and refusing his proffer of money to assist her in her flight, she bids him begone.

Ægeus, the son of Pandion, is then introduced, who explains that he is on his way home from the oracle of Phœbus, which he had gone to consult as to how he might have offspring, he, though married, being destitute of children. Medea tells him of her troubles, and begs him to receive her at his hearth in his country, promising that she will, by her charms, cause him to accomplish his heart's desire. Ægeus promises to receive her hospitably should she come to his country, but refuses to accompany her on her journey there, and thereupon takes his departure.

Medea then explains to the chorus her plans for obtaining revenge and bids them go and bring Jason to her. Him she conciliates with repentant words and begs that he persuade King Creon not to banish her two sons from the realm, but to allow them to remain in Corinth in order that they may be brought up at the king's palace. She bids her attendants bring a fine-wrought robe and a golden-twined chaplet for her sons to bear as a nuptial present to the royal bride, saying that gifts persuade even the gods, and that they may propitiate Creon and cause him to grant her request.

Her sons carry the presents to Glauce, who promises to intercede with Creon to allow them to remain at the palace. She then puts on the variegated robe and places the golden chaplet upon her head. But then occurs a dreadful sight. The presents which the slighted wife had sent to her rival have been anointed with a subtle poison, and scarcely does the unfortunate Glauce array herself in them when suddenly a white foam bursts from her mouth, the blood drops from the top of her head and the flesh begins to drop from her body as though she were being burned at the stake. Her father, rushing in and beholding his wretched child, embraces her, and being immediately affected in a like manner, they both die in each other's arms.

Medea then kills her two children, and is about to escape from Corinth when Jason presents himself at the gates of his palace, seeking to punish her for her crimes. He demands admittance of the attendants, but is told by Medea to desist, as he shall never lay hands upon her. Then mounting a chariot drawn by dragons, Medea pauses long enough to tell Jason that she is going to dwell with Ægeus, but that he shall die a fitting death, struck by a relic of his ship Argo, and is borne away taking with her the bodies of her slaughtered sons.

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MEDEA.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

NURSE.
TUTOR.
MEDEA.
CHORUS OF CORINTHIAN WOMEN.
CREON.
JASON.
ÆGEUS.
MESSENGER.
SONS OF MEDEA.

The Scene lies in the vestibule of the palace of Jason at Corinth.

THE ARGUMENT.

JASON, having come to Corinth, and bringing with him Medea, espouses Glauce, the daughter of Creon, king of Corinth. But Medea, on the point of being banished from Corinth by Creon, having asked to remain one day, and having obtained her wish, sends to Glauce, by the hands of her sons, presents, as an acknowledgment for the favor, a robe and a golden chaplet, which she puts on and perishes; Creon also having embraced his daughter is destroyed. But Medea, when she had slain her children, escapes to Athens, in a chariot drawn by winged dragons, which she received from the Sun, and there marries Ægeus son of Pandion.

MEDEA.

NURSE OF MEDEA.

WOULD that the hull of Argo had not winged her way to the Colchian land through the Cyanean Symplegades,[1] and that the pine felled in the forests of Pelion had never fallen, nor had caused the hands of the chiefs to row,[2] who went in search of the golden fleece for Pelais; for neither then would my mistress Medea have sailed to the towers of the Iolcian land, deeply smitten in her mind with the love of Jason; nor having persuaded the daughters of Pelias to slay their father would she have inhabited this country of Corinth with her husband and her children, pleasing indeed by her flight[3] the citizens to whose land she came, and herself concurring in every respect with Jason; which is the surest support of conjugal happiness, when the wife is not estranged from the husband. But now every thing is at variance, and the dearest ties are weakened. For having betrayed his own children,

[1] The Cyaneæ Petræ, or Symplegades, were two rocks in the mouth of the Euxine Sea, said to meet together with prodigious violence, and crush the passing ships. See Pindar. Pyth. iv. 386.

[2] ἐρετμῶσαι signifies to make to row; ἐρετμῆσαι, to row. In the same sense the two verbs derived from πόλεμος are used, πολεμόω signifying ad bellum excito; πολεμέω, bellum gero.

[3] Elmsley reads φυγὴ in the nominative case, "*a flight indeed pleasing,*" etc.

and my mistress, Jason reposes in royal wedlock, having married the daughter of Creon, who is prince of this land. But Medea the unhappy, dishonored, calls on his oaths, and recalls the hands they plighted, the greatest pledge of fidelity, and invokes the gods to witness what return she meets with from Jason. And she lies without tasting food, having sunk her body in grief, dissolving all her tedious time in tears, after she had once known that she had been injured by her husband, neither raising her eye, nor lifting her countenance from the ground; but as the rock, or the wave of the sea, does she listen to her friends when advised. Save that sometimes having turned her snow-white neck she to herself bewails her dear father, and her country, and her house, having betrayed which she hath come hither with a man who has now dishonored her. And she wretched hath discovered from affliction what it is not to forsake one's paternal country. But she hates her children, nor is she delighted at beholding them: but I fear her, lest she form some new design: for violent is her mind, nor will it endure to suffer ills. I know her, and I fear her, lest she should force the sharpened sword through her heart, or even should murder the princess and him who married her, and after that receive some greater ill. For she is violent; he who engages with her in enmity will not with ease at least sing the song of victory. But these her children are coming hither having ceased from their exercises, nothing mindful of their mother's ills, for the mind of youth is not wont to grieve.

TUTOR, WITH THE SONS OF MEDEA, NURSE.

TUT. O thou ancient possession of my mistress's house, why dost thou stand at the gates preserving thus thy solitude, bewailing to thyself our misfortunes? How doth Medea wish to be left alone without thee?

NUR. O aged man, attendant on the children of Jason, to faithful servants the affairs of their masters turning out ill are a calamity, and lay hold upon their feelings. For I have arrived at such a height of grief that desire hath stolen on me to come forth hence and tell the misfortunes of Medea to the earth and heaven.

TUT. Does not she wretched yet receive any respite from her grief?

NUR. I envy thy ignorance; her woe is at its rise, and not even yet at its height.

TUT. O unwise woman, if it is allowable to say this of one's lords, since she knows nothing of later ills.

NUR. But what is this, O aged man? grudge not to tell me.

TUT. Nothing: I have repented even of what was said before.

NUR. Do not, I beseech you by your beard, conceal it from your fellow-servant; for I will preserve silence, if it be necessary, on these subjects.

TUT. I heard from some one who was saying, not appearing to listen, having approached the places where dice is played, where the elders sit, around the hallowed font of Pirene, that the king of this land, Creon, intends to banish from the Corinthian country these children, together with their mother; whether this report be true, however, I know not; but I wish this may not be the case.

NUR. And will Jason endure to see his children suffer this, even although he is at enmity with their mother?

TUT. Ancient alliances are deserted for new, and he is no friend to this family.

NUR. We perish then, if to the old we shall add a new ill, before the former be exhausted.[1]

[1] Literally, *Before we have drained this to the very dregs.* So Virgil, Æn. iv. 14. *Quæ bella exhausta canebat!*

Tut. But do thou, for it is not seasonable that my mistress should know this, restrain your tongue, and be silent on this report.

Nur. O my children, do you hear what your father is toward you? Yet may he not perish, for he is my master, yet he is found to be treacherous toward his friends.

Tut. And what man is not? dost thou only now know this, that every one loves himself dearer than his neighbor,[1] some indeed with justice, but others even for the sake of gain, unless it be that[2] their father loves not these at least on account of new nuptials.

Nur. Go within the house, my children, for all will be well. But do thou keep these as much as possible out of the way, and let them not approach their mother, deranged through grief. For but now I saw her looking with wildness in her eyes on these, as about to execute some design, nor will she cease from her fury, I well know, before she overwhelm some one with it; upon her enemies, however, and not her friends, may she do some [ill].

Medea. (*within*) Wretch that I am, and miserable on account of my misfortunes, alas me! would I might perish!

Nur. Thus it is, my children; your mother excites her heart, excites her fury. Hasten as quick as possible within the house, and come not near her sight, nor approach her, but guard against the fierce temper and violent nature of her self-willed mind. Go now, go as quick as possible within. But it is evident that the cloud of grief raised up from the beginning will quickly burst forth with greater fury; what I pray will her soul, great in rage, implacable, irritated by ills, perform!

[1] Ter. And. Act. ii. Sc. 5. *Omnes sibi malle melius esse quam alteri.* Ac. iv. Sc. 1. *Proximus sum egomet mihi.*

[2] Elmsley reads καὶ for εἰ, "*And their father,*" etc.

MED. Alas! alas! I wretched have suffered, have suffered treatment worthy of great lamentation. O ye accursed children of a hated mother, may ye perish with your father, and may the whole house fall.

NUR. Alas! alas! me miserable! but why should your children share their father's error? Why dost thou hate these? Alas me, my children, how beyond measure do I grieve lest ye suffer any evil! Dreadful are the dispositions of tyrants, and somehow in few things controlled, in most absolute, they with difficulty lay aside their passion. The being accustomed then[1] to live in mediocrity of life is the better; may it be my lot then to grow old if not in splendor, at least in security. For, in the first place, even to mention the name of moderation carries with it superiority, but to use it is by far the best conduct for men; but excess of fortune brings more power to men than is convenient;[2] and has brought greater woes upon families, when the Deity be enraged.

NURSE, CHORUS.

CHOR. I heard the voice, I heard the cry of the unhappy Colchian; is not she yet appeased? but, O aged matron, tell me; for within the apartment with double doors, I heard her cry; nor am I delighted, O woman, with the griefs of the family, since it is friendly to me.

NUR. The family is not; these things are gone already: for he possesses the bed of royalty; but she, my mistress, is

[1] In Elms. Dind. *τὸ γὰρ εἰθίσθαι*, "*for the being accustomed*," etc.

[2] *δύναται* here signifies *ἰσχύει σθένει*; and in this sense it is repeatedly used; *οὐδένα καιρόν*, in this place, is not to be interpreted "intempestive," but "immoderate, supra modum." For this signification consult Stephens's Thesaurus, word *καιρός*. ELMSLEY.

melting away her life in her chamber, in no way soothing her mind by the advice of any one of her friends.

Med. Alas! alas! may the flame of heaven rush through my head, what profit for me to live any longer. Alas! alas! may I rest myself in death, having left a hated life.

Chor. Dost thou hear, O Jove, and earth, and light, the cry which the wretched bride utters? why I pray should this insatiable love of the marriage-bed hasten thee, O vain woman, to death? Pray not for this. But if thy husband courts a new bed, be not thus[1] enraged with him. Jove will avenge these wrongs for thee: waste not thyself so, bewailing thy husband.

Med. O great Themis and revered Diana, do ye behold what I suffer, having bound my accursed husband by powerful oaths? Whom may I at some time see and his bride torn piecemeal with their very houses, who dare to injure me first. O my father, O my city, whom I basely abandoned, having slain my brother.

Nur. Do ye hear what she says, and how she invokes Themis hearing the vow, and Jove who is considered the dispenser of oaths to mortals? It is not possible that my mistress will lull her rage to rest under any trivial circumstance.

Chor. By what means could she come into our sight, and hear the voice of our discourse, if she would by any means remit her fierce anger and her fury of mind. Let not my zeal however be wanting ever to my friends. But go and conduct her hither from without the house, my friend, and tell her this: hasten, before she injure in any way those within, for this grief of hers is increased to a great height.

Nur. I will do it, but I fear that I shall not persuade my

[1] δδε is used in this sense v. 49, 687, 901, of this Play.

mistress; nevertheless I will give you this favor of my labor. And yet with the aspect of a lioness that has just brought forth does she look sternly on her attendants when any one approaches near attempting to address her. But thou wouldest not err in calling men of old foolish and nothing wise, who invented songs, for festivals, for banquets, and for suppers, the delights of life that charm the ear; but no mortal has discovered how to soothe with music and with varied strains those bitter pangs, from which death and dreadful misfortunes overthrow families. And yet for men to assuage these griefs with music were gain; but where the plenteous banquet is furnished, why raise they the song in vain? for the present bounty of the feast brings pleasure of itself to men.

CHOR. I heard the dismal sound of groans, and in a shrill voice she vents her bitter[1] anguish on the traitor to her bed, her faithless husband—and suffering wrongs she calls upon the Goddess Themis, arbitress of oaths, daughter of Jove, who conducted her to the opposite coast of Greece, across the sea by night, over the salt straits of the boundless ocean.

MEDEA, CHORUS.

MED. Ye Corinthian dames, I have come from out my palace; do not in any wise blame me; for I have known many men who have been[2] renowned, some who have lived far from public notice, and others in the world; but those of a retired turn have gained for themselves a character of infamy and indolence. For justice dwells not in the eyes of

[1] *μογερά* is best taken with Reiske as the accusative plural, though the Scholiast considers it the nominative singular. ELMSLEY.

[2] *γεγῶτας* need not be translated as *νομιζομένους*, the sense is *οντας*: so *ἀνθάδης γεγώς*, line 225.

man,[1] whoever, before he can well discover the disposition of a man, hates him at sight, in no way wronged by him. But it is necessary for a stranger exactly to conform himself to the state, nor would I praise the native, whoever becoming self-willed is insolent to his fellow-citizens through ignorance. But this unexpected event that hath fallen upon me hath destroyed my spirit: I am going, and having given up the pleasure of life I am desirous to meet death, my friends. For he on whom my all rested, as you well know, my husband, has turned out the basest of men. But of all things as many as have life and intellect, we women are the most wretched race. Who indeed first must purchase a husband with excess of money, and receive him a lord of our persons; for this is a still greater ill than the former. And in this is the greatest risk, whether we receive a bad one or a good one; for divorces bring not good fame to women, nor is it possible to repudiate one's husband. But on passing to new tempers and new laws, one need be a prophetess, as one can not learn of one's self, what sort of consort one shall most likely experience. And if with us carefully performing these things a husband shall dwell not imposing on us a yoke with severity, enviable is our life; if not, to die is better. But a man, when he is displeased living with those at home, having gone abroad is wont to relieve his heart of uneasiness, having recourse either to some friend or compeer. But we must look but to one person. But they say of us that we live a life of ease at home, but they are fighting with the spear; judging

[1] That is, the character of man can not be discovered by the countenance: so Juvenal,

Fronti nulla fides.

ὅστις, though in the singular number, refers to βροτῶν in the plural: a similar construction is met with in Homer, Il. L. 279.

ἄνθρωπους τίννυσθον ὅ τις κ' ἐπίορκον ὀμόσσῃ.

ill, since I would rather thrice stand in arms, than once suffer the pangs of child-birth. But, for the same argument comes not home to you and me, this is thy city, and thy father's house, thine are both the luxuries of life, and the society of friends; but I being destitute, cityless, am wronged by my husband, brought as a prize from a foreign land, having neither mother, nor brother, nor relation to afford me shelter from this calamity. So much then I wish to obtain from you, if any plan or contrivance be devised by me to repay with justice these injuries on my husband, and on him who gave his daughter, and on her to whom he was married,[1] that you would be silent; for a woman in other respects is full of fear, and timid to look upon deeds of courage and the sword; but when she is injured in her bed, no other disposition is more blood-thirsty.

CHOR. I will do this; for with justice, Medea, wilt thou avenge thyself on thy husband, and I do not wonder that you lament your misfortunes. But I see Creon monarch of this land advancing, the messenger of new counsels.

CREON, MEDEA, CHORUS.

CRE. Thee of gloomy countenance, and enraged with thy husband, Medea, I command to depart in exile from out of this land, taking with thee thy two children, and not to delay in any way, since I am the arbiter of this edict, and I will not return back to my palace, until I shall drive thee beyond the boundaries of this realm.

[1] Grammarians teach us that γαμεῖν is applied to the husband, γαμεῖσθαι to the wife; and this rule will generally be found to hold good. We must either then read ἥ τ' ἐγήματο, which Porson does not object to, and Elmsley adopts; or understand ἐγήματο in an ironical sense, in the spirit of Martial's *Uxori nubere nolo meæ:* in the latter case ᾗ τ' ἐγῆματο should be read (not ἣν τ'), as being the proper syntax.

MED. Alas! alas! I wretched am utterly destroyed, for my enemies stretch out every cable against me; nor is there any easy escape from this evil, but I will speak, although suffering injurious treatment; for what, Creon, dost thou drive me from this land?

CRE. I fear thee (there is no need for me to wrap my words in obscurity), lest thou do my child some irremediable mischief. And many circumstances are in unison with this dread. Thou art wise, and skilled in many evil sciences, and thou art exasperated, deprived of thy husband's bed. And I hear that thou threatenest, as they tell me, to wreak some deed of vengeance on the betrother, and the espouser and the espoused; against this then, before I suffer, will I guard. Better is it for me now to incur enmity from you, than softened by your words afterward greatly to lament it.

MED. Alas! alas! not now for the first time, but often, Creon, hath this opinion injured me, and worked me much woe. But whatever man is prudent, let him never educate his children too deep in wisdom. For, independent of the other charges of idleness which they meet with, they find hostile envy from their fellow-citizens. For holding out to fools some new-discovered wisdom, thou wilt seem to be useless and not wise. And being judged superior to others who seem to have some varied knowledge, thou wilt appear offensive in the city. But even I myself share this fortune; for being wise, to some I am an object of envy, but to others unsuited; but I am not very wise. Thou then fearest me, lest thou suffer some grievous mischief.[1] My affairs are not in a state, fear me not, Creon, so as to offend against princes.

[1] The primary signification of πλημμελὴς is *absonus, out of tune:* hence is easily deduced the signification in which it is often found in Euripides. The word πλημμελήσας occurs in the Phœnissæ, l. 1669.

For in what hast thou injured me? Thou hast given thy daughter to whom thy mind led thee; but I hate my husband: but thou, I think, didst these things in prudence. And now I envy not that thy affairs are prospering; make your alliances, be successful; but suffer me to dwell in this land, for although injured will I keep silence, overcome by my superiors.

CRE. Thou speakest soft words to the ear, but within my mind I have my fears, lest thou meditate some evil intent. And so much the less do I trust thee than before. For a woman that is quick to anger, and a man likewise, is easier to guard against, than one that is crafty and keeps silence. But begone as quick as possible, make no more words; since this is decreed, and thou hast no art, by which thou wilt stay with us, being hostile to me.

MED. No I beseech you by your knees, and your newly-married daughter.

CRE. Thou wastest words; for thou wilt never persuade me.

MED. Wilt thou then banish me, nor reverence my prayers?

CRE. For I do not love thee better than my own family.

MED. O my country, how I remember thee now!

CRE. For next to my children it is much the dearest thing to me.

MED. Alas! alas! how great an ill is love to man!

CRE. That is, I think, as fortune also shall attend it.

MED. Jove, let it not escape thine eye, who is the cause of these misfortunes.

CRE. Begone, fond woman, and free me from these cares.

MED. Care indeed;[1] and do not I experience cares?

[1] Elmsley approves of the reading adopted by Porson, though he has given in his text

CRE. Quickly shalt thou be driven hence by force by the hands of my domestics.

MED. No, I pray not this at least; but I implore thee, Creon.

CRE. Thou wilt give trouble, woman, it seems.[1]

MED. I will go; I dare not ask to obtain this of you.

CRE. Why then dost thou resist, and wilt not depart from these realms?

MED. Permit me to remain here this one day, and to bring my purpose to a conclusion, in what way we shall fly, and to make provision for my sons, since their father in no way regards providing for his children; but pity them, for thou also art the father of children; and it is probable that thou hast tenderness; for of myself I have no care whether I may suffer banishment, but I weep for them experiencing this calamity.

CRE. My disposition is least of all imperious, and through feeling pity in many cases have I injured myself. And now I see that I am doing wrong, O lady, but nevertheless thou shalt obtain thy request; but this I warn thee, if to-morrow's light of the God of day shall behold thee and thy children within the confines of these realms, thou shalt die: this word is spoken in truth. But now if thou must stay, remain here yet one day, for thou wilt not do any horrid deed of which I have dread.

MEDEA, CHORUS.

CHOR. Unhappy woman! alas wretched on account of thy

πονοῦμεν ἡμεῖς, κ'ου πόνων κεχρήμεθα.

"*We are oppressed with cares, and want not other cares,*" as being more likely to have come from Euripides. So also Dindorf.

[1] ὡς ἔοικας is here used for the more common expression ὡς ἔοικεν. So Herodotus, Clio, clv. οὐ παύσονται οἱ Λυδοὶ, ὡς οἴκασι, πράγματα παρέχοντες, και αὐτοὶ ἔχοντες. See also Hecuba, 801.

griefs! whither wilt thou turn? what hospitality, or house, or country wilt thou find a refuge for these ills? how the Deity hath led thee, Medea, into a pathless tide of woes!

MED. Ill hath it been done on every side. Who will gainsay it? but these things are not in this way, do not yet think it. Still is there a contest for those lately married, and to those allied to them no small affliction. For dost thou think I ever would have fawned upon this man, if I were not to gain something, or form some plan? I would not even have addressed him. I would not even have touched him with my hands. But he hath arrived at such a height of folly, as that, when it was in his power to have crushed my plans, by banishing me from this land, he hath granted me to stay this day in which three of mine enemies will I put to death, the father, the bride, and my husband. But having in my power many resources of destruction against them, I know not, my friends, which I shall first attempt. Whether shall I consume the bridal house with fire, or force the sharpened sword through her heart having entered the chamber by stealth where the couch is spread. But one thing is against me; if I should be caught entering the house and prosecuting my plans, by my death I shall afford laughter for my foes. Best then is it to pursue the straight path, in which I am most skilled, to take them off by poison. Let it be so. And suppose them dead: what city will receive me? What hospitable stranger affording a land of safety and a faithful home will protect my person? There is none. Waiting then yet a little time, if any tower of safety shall appear to us, I will proceed to this murder in treachery and silence. But if ill fortune that leaves me without resource force me, I myself having grasped the sword, although I should die, will kill them, and will rush to the extreme height of daring. For never, I swear by my mistress whom I revere most of all, and have chosen

for my assistant, Hecate, who dwells in the inmost recesses of my house, shall any one of them wring my heart with grief with impunity. Bitter and mournful to them will I make these nuptials, and bitter this alliance, and my flight from this land. But come, spare none of these sciences in which thou art skilled, Medea, deliberating and plotting. Proceed to the deed of terror: now is the time of resolution: seest thou what thou art suffering? Ill doth it become thee to incur ridicule from the race of Sisyphus, and from the nuptials of Jason, who art sprung from a noble father, and from the sun. And thou art skilled. Besides also we women are, by nature, to good actions of the least capacity, but the most cunning inventors of every ill.

Chor. The waters of the hallowed streams flow upward to their sources, and justice and everything is reversed. The counsels of men are treacherous, and no longer is the faith of heaven firm. But fame changes, so that my sex may have the glory.[1] Honor cometh to the female race; no longer shall opprobrious fame oppress the women. But the Muses shall cease from their ancient strains, from celebrating our perfidy. For Phœbus, leader of the choir, gave not to our minds the heavenly music of the lyre, since they would in turn have raised a strain against the race of men. But time of old hath much to say both of our life and the life of men. But thou hast sailed from thy father's house with maddened heart, having passed through the double rocks of the ocean, and thou dwellest in a foreign land, having lost the shelter of thy widowed bed, wretched woman, and art driven dis-

[1] Beck interprets this passage, "Mea quidem vita ut non habeat laudem, fama obstat." Heath translates it, "Jam in contrariam partem tendens fama efficit, ut mea quoque vita laudem habeat. We are told by the Scholiast, that by βιοτὰν is to be understood φύσιν.

honored an exile from this land. The reverence of oaths is gone, nor does shame any longer dwell in mighty Greece, but hath fled away through the air. But thou helpless woman hast neither father's house to afford you haven from your woes, and another more powerful queen of the nuptial bed rules over the house.

JASON, MEDEA, CHORUS.

JAS. Not now for the first time, but often have I perceived that fierce anger is an irremediable ill. For though it was in your power to inhabit this land and this house, bearing with gentleness the determination of thy superiors, by thy rash words thou shalt be banished from this land. And to me indeed it is of no importance; never cease from saying that Jason is the worst of men. But for what has been said by thee against the royal family, think it the greatest good fortune that thou art punished by banishment only. I indeed was always employed in diminishing the anger of the enraged princes, and was willing that thou shouldest remain. But thou remittest not of thy folly, always reviling the ruling powers; wherefore thou shalt be banished from the land. But nevertheless even after this am I come, not wearied with my friends, providing for thee, O woman, that thou mightest not be banished with thy children, either without money, or in want of any thing. Banishment draws many misfortunes with it. For although thou hatest me, I never could wish thee evil.

MED. O thou vilest of men (for this is the greatest reproach I have in my power with my tongue to tell thee, for thy unmanly cowardice), hast thou come to us, hast thou come, who art most hateful? This is not fortitude, or confidence, to look in the face of friends whom thou hast injured, but the worst of all diseases among men, impudence.

But thou hast done well in coming. For both I shall be lightened in my heart while reviling thee, and thou wilt be pained at hearing me. But I will first begin to speak from the first circumstances. I preserved thee (as those Greeks well know as many as embarked with thee on board the same ship Argo) when sent to master the fire-breathing bulls with the yoke, and to sow the fatal seed: and having slain the dragon who watching around the golden fleece guarded it with spiry folds, a sleepless guard, I raised up to thee a light of safety. But I myself having betrayed my father, and my house, came to the Peliotic Iolcos[1] with thee, with more readiness than prudence. And I slew Pelias by a death which it is most miserable to die, by the hands of his own children, and I freed thee from every fear. And having experienced these services from me, thou vilest of men, thou hast betrayed me and hast procured for thyself a new bed, children being born to thee, for if thou wert still childless it would be pardonable in thee to be enamored of this alliance. But the faith of oaths is vanished; nor can I discover whether thou thinkest that the former Gods are not still in power, or whether new laws are now laid down for men, since thou art at least conscious of being perjured toward me. Alas! this right hand which thou hast often touched, and these knees, since in vain have I been polluted by a wicked husband, and have failed in my hopes. Come (for I will converse with thee as with a friend, not expecting to receive any benefit from thee at least, but nevertheless I will; for when questioned thou wilt appear more base), now whither shall I turn? Whether to my father's house, which I be-

[1] Iolcos was a city of Thessaly, distant about seven stadii from the sea, where the parents of Jason lived: Pelion was both a mountain and city of Thessaly, close to Iolcos; whence Iolcos is called Peliotic.

trayed for thee, and my country, and came hither? or to the miserable daughters of Pelias? friendly would they indeed receive me in their house, whose father I slew. For thus it is: I am in enmity with my friends at home; but those whom I ought not to injure, by obliging thee, I make my enemies. On which account in return for this thou hast made me to be called happy by many dames through Greece, and in thee I, wretch that I am, have an admirable and faithful husband, if cast out at least I shall fly this land, deserted by my friends, lonely with thy lonely children. Fair renown indeed to the new married bridegroom, that his children are wandering in poverty, and I also who preserved thee. O Jove, why I pray hast thou given to men certain proofs of the gold which is adulterate, but no mark is set by nature on the person of men by which one may distinguish the bad man.

CHOR. Dreadful is that anger and irremediable, when friends with friends kindle strife.

JAS. It befits me, it seems, not to be weak in argument, but as the prudent pilot of a vessel, with all the sail that can be hoisted, to run from out of thy violent abuse, O woman. But I, since thou thus much vauntest thy favors, think that Venus alone both of Gods and men was the protectress of my voyage. But thou hast a fickle mind, but it is an invidious account to go through, how love compelled thee with his inevitable arrows to preserve my life. But I will not follow up arguments with too great accuracy, for where thou hast assisted me it is well. Moreover thou hast received more at least from my safety than thou gavest, as I will explain to thee. First of all thou dwellest in Greece instead of a foreign land, and thou learnest what justice is, and to enjoy laws, not to be directed by mere force. And all the Grecians have seen that thou art wise, and thou hast re-

nown; but if thou wert dwelling in the extreme confines of that land, there would not have been fame of thee. But may neither gold in my house be my lot, nor to attune the strain more sweet than Orpheus, if my fortune be not conspicuous. So much then have I said of my toils; for thou first broughtest forward this contest of words. But with regard to those reproaches which thou heapest on me for my royal marriage, in this will I show first that I have been wise, in the next place moderate, thirdly a great friend to thee, and my children: but be silent. After I had come hither from the Iolcian land bringing with me many grievous calamities, what measure more fortunate than this could I have invented, than, an exile as I was, to marry the daughter of the monarch? Not, by which thou art grated, loathing thy bed, nor smitten with desire of a new bride, nor having emulation of a numerous offspring, for those born to me are sufficient, nor do I find fault with that; but that (which is of the greatest consequence) we might live honorably, and might not be in want, knowing well that every friend flies out of the way of a poor man; and that I might bring up my children worthy of my house, and that having begotten brothers to those children sprung from thee, I might place them on the same footing, and having united the family, I might flourish; for both thou hast some need of children, and to me it were advantageous to advance my present progeny by means of the children which might arise; have I determined ill? not even thou couldest say so, if thy bed did not gall thee. But thus far have you come, that your bed being safe, you women think that you have every thing. But if any misfortune befall that, the most excellent and fairest objects you make the most hateful. It were well then that men should generate children from some other source, and that the female race should not

exist, and thus there would not have been any evil among men.[1]

CHOR. Jason, thou hast well adorned these arguments of thine, but nevertheless to me, although I speak reluctantly, thou appearest, in betraying thy wife, to act unjustly.

MED. Surely I am in many things different from many mortals, for in my judgment, whatever man being unjust, is deeply skilled in argument, merits the severest punishment. For vaunting that with his tongue he can well gloze over injustice, he dares to work deceit, but he is not over-wise. Thus do not thou also be now plausible to me, nor skilled in speaking, for one word will overthrow thee: it behooved thee, if thou wert not a bad man, to have contracted this marriage having persuaded me, and not without the knowledge of thy friends.

JAS. Well wouldest thou have lent assistance to this report, if I had mentioned the marriage to thee, who not even now endurest to lay aside this unabated rage of heart.

MED. This did not move thee, but a foreign bed would lead in its result to an old age without honor.

JAS. Be well assured of this, that I did not form this alliance with the princess, which I now hold, for the sake of the woman, but, as I said before also, wishing to preserve thee, and to beget royal children brothers to my sons, a support to our house.

MED. Let not a splendid life of bitterness be my lot, nor wealth, which rends my heart.

[1] For the same sentiment more fully expressed, see Hippolytus, 616–625. See also Paradise Lost, x. 890.

> O, why did God,
> Creator wise, that peopled highest heaven
> With spirits masculine, create at last
> This novelty on earth, this fair defect
> Of nature, and not fill the world at once
> With men, as angels, without feminine?

JAS. Dost thou know how to alter thy prayers, and appear wiser? Let not good things ever seem to you bitter, nor when in prosperity seem to be in adversity.

MED. Insult me, since thou hast refuge, but I destitute shall fly this land.

JAS. Thou chosest this thyself, blame no one else.

MED. By doing what? by marrying and betraying thee?

JAS. By imprecating unhallowed curses on the royal family.

MED. From thy house at least am I laden with curses.

JAS. I will not dispute more of this with thee. But if thou wishest to receive either for thyself or children any part of my wealth as an assistant on thy flight, speak, since I am ready to give with an unsparing hand, and to send tokens of hospitality to my friends, who will treat you well; and refusing these thou wilt be foolish, woman, but ceasing from thine anger, thou wilt gain better treatment.

MED. I will neither use thy friends, nor will I receive aught; do not give to me, for the gifts of a bad man bring no assistance.

JAS. Then I call the Gods to witness, that I wish to assist thee and thy children in every thing; but good things please thee not, but thou rejectest thy friends with audacity, wherefore shalt thou grieve the more.

MED. Begone, for thou art captured by desire of thy new bride, tarrying so long without the palace; wed her, for perhaps, but with the assistance of the God shall it be said, thou wilt make such a marriage alliance, as thou wilt hereafter wish to renounce.

CHOR. The loves, when they come too impetuously, have given neither good report nor virtue among men, but if Venus come with moderation, no other Goddess is so benign. Never, O my mistress, mayest thou send forth against me

from thy golden bow thy inevitable shaft, having steeped it in desire. But may temperance preserve me, the noblest gift of heaven; never may dreaded Venus, having smitten my mind for another's bed, heap upon me jealous passions and unabated quarrels, but approving the peaceful union, may she quick of perception sit in judgment on the bed of women. O my country, and my house, never may I be an outcast of my city, having a life scarce to be endured through poverty, the most lamentable of all woes. By death, by death, may I before that be subdued, having lived to accomplish that day; but no greater misfortune is there than to be deprived of one's paternal country. We have seen it, nor have we to speak from others' accounts; for thee, neither city nor friend hath pitied, though suffering the most dreadful anguish. Thankless may he perish who desires not to assist his friends, having unlocked the pure treasures of his mind; never shall he be friend to me.

ÆGEUS, MEDEA, CHORUS.

ÆG. Medea, hail! for no one hath known a more honorable salutation to address to friends than this.

MED. Hail thou also, son of the wise Pandion, Ægeus, coming from what quarter dost thou tread the plain of this land?

ÆG. Having left the ancient oracle of Phœbus.

MED. But wherefore wert thou sent to the prophetic centre of the earth?

ÆG. Inquiring of the God how offspring may arise to me?

MED. By the Gods, tell me, dost thou live this life hitherto childless?

ÆG. Childless I am, by the disposal of some deity.

MED. Hast thon a wife, or knowest thou not the marriage-bed?

ÆG. I am not destitute of the connubial bed.

MED. What then did Apollo tell thee respecting thy offspring?

ÆG. Words deeper than a man can form opinion of.

MED. Is it allowable for me to know the oracle of the God?

ÆG. Certainly, inasmuch as it needs also a deep-skilled mind.

MED. What then did he say? Speak, if I may hear.

ÆG. That I was not to loose the projecting foot of the vessel—

MED. Before thou didst what, or came to what land?

ÆG. Before I revisit my paternal hearth.

MED. Then as desiring what dost thou direct thy voyage to this land?

ÆG. There is one Pittheus, king of the country of Trazene.

MED. The most pious son, as report says, of Pelops.

ÆG. To him I wish to communicate the oracle of the God.

MED. For he is a wise man, and versed in such matters.

ÆG. And to me at least the dearest of all my friends in war.

MED. Mayest thou prosper, and obtain what thou desirest.

ÆG. But why is thine eye and thy color thus faded?

MED. Ægeus, my husband is the worst of all men.

ÆG. What sayest thou? tell me all thy troubles.

MED. Jason wrongs me, having never suffered wrong from me.

ÆG. Having done what? tell me more clearly.

MED. He hath here a wife besides me, mistress of the house.

ÆG. Hath he dared to commit this disgraceful action?

MED. Be assured he has; but we his former friends are dishonored.

ÆG. Enamored of her, or hating thy bed?

MED. [Smitten with] violent love indeed, he was faithless to his friends.

ÆG. Let him perish then, since, as you say, he is a bad man.

MED. He was charmed to receive an alliance with princes.

ÆG. And who gives the bride to him? finish the account, I beg.

MED. Creon, who is monarch of this Corinthian land.

ÆG. Pardonable was it then that thou art grieved, O lady.

MED. I perish, and in addition to this am I banished from this land.

ÆG. By whom? thou art mentioning another fresh misfortune.

MED. Creon drives me an exile out of this land of Corinth.

ÆG. And does Jason suffer it? I praise not this.

MED. By his words he does not, but at heart he wishes [to endure my banishment]: but by this thy beard I entreat thee, and by these thy knees, and I become thy suppliant, pity me, pity this unfortunate woman, nor behold me going forth in exile abandoned, but receive me at thy hearth in thy country and thy house. Thus by the Gods shall thy desire of children be accomplished to thee, and thou thyself shalt die in happiness. But thou knowest not what this fortune is that thou hast found; but I will free thee from being childless, and I will cause thee to raise up offspring, such charms I know.

ÆG. On many accounts, O lady, am I willing to confer this favor on thee, first on account of the Gods, then of the children, whose birth thou holdest forth; for on this point else I am

totally sunk in despair. But thus am I determined: if thou comest to my country, I will endeavor to receive thee with hospitality, being a just man; so much however I beforehand apprise thee of, O lady, I shall not be willing to lead thee with me from this land; but if thou comest thyself to my house, thou shalt stay there in safety, and to no one will I give thee up. But do thou of thyself withdraw thy foot from this country, for I wish to be without blame even among strangers.

MED. It shall be so, but if there was a pledge of this given to me, I should have all things from thee in a noble manner.

ÆG. Dost thou not trust me? what is thy difficulty?

MED. I trust thee; but the house of Pelias is mine enemy, and Creon too; to these then, wert thou bound by oaths, thou wouldest not give me up from the country, should they attempt to drag me thence. But having agreed by words alone, and without calling the Gods to witness, thou mightest be their friend, and perhaps[1] be persuaded by an embassy; for weak is my state, but theirs are riches, and a royal house.

ÆG. Thou hast spoken much prudence, O lady. But if it seems fit to thee that I should do this, I refuse not. For to me also this seems the safest plan, that I should have some pretext to show to your enemies, and thy safety is better secured; propose the Gods that I am to invoke.

MED. Swear by the earth, and by the sun the father of my father, and join the whole race of Gods.

ÆG. That I will do what thing, or what not do? speak.

MED. That thou wilt neither thyself ever cast me forth from out of thy country, nor, if any one of my enemies desire to drag me thence, that thou wilt, while living, give me up willingly.

[1] Person rightly reads *τάχ' ἂν πίθοιο* with Wyttenbach.

ÆG. I swear by the earth, and the hallowed majesty of the sun, and by all the Gods, to abide by what I hear from thee.

MED. It is sufficient: but what wilt thou endure shouldest thou not abide by this oath?

ÆG. That which befalls impious men.

MED. Go with blessings; for every thing is well. And I will come as quick as possible to thy city, having performed what I intend, and having obtained what I desire.

CHOR. But may the son of Maia the king, the guide, conduct thee safely to thy house, and the plans of those things, which thou anxiously keepest in thy mind, mayest thou bring to completion, since, Ægeus, thou hast appeared to us to be a noble man.

MEDEA, CHORUS.

MED. O Jove, and thou vengeance of Jove, and thou light of the sun, now, my friends, shall I obtain a splendid victory over my enemies, and I have struck into the path. Now is there hope that my enemies will suffer punishment. For this man, where I was most at a loss, hath appeared a harbor to my plans. From him will I make fast my cable from the stern, having come to the town and citadel of Pallas. But now will I communicate all my plans to thee; but receive my words not as attuned to pleasure. Having sent one of my domestics, I will ask Jason to come into my presence; and when he is come, I will address gentle words to him, as that it appears to me that these his actions are both honorable, and are advantageous and well determined on.[1] And I will entreat

[1] Elmsley has

"ὡς καὶ δοκεῖ μοι ταῦτα, καὶ καλῶς ἔχειν
γάμους τυράννων, οὓς προδοὺς ἡμῖν ἔχει,
καὶ ξύμφορ' εἶναι, καὶ καλως ἐγνωσμένα."

"that these things appear good to me, and that the alliance with the

him that my sons may stay; not that I would leave my children in a hostile country for my enemies to insult, but that by deceit I may slay the king's daughter. For I will send them bearing presents in their hands, both a fine-wrought robe, and a golden-twined wreath.[1] And if she take the ornaments and place them round her person, she shall perish miserably, and every one who shall touch the damsel; with such charms will I anoint the presents. Here however I finish this account; but I bewail the deed such as must next be done by me; for I shall slay my children; there is no one who shall rescue them from me; and having heaped in ruins the whole house of Jason, I will go from out this land, flying the murder of my dearest children, and having dared a deed most unhallowed. For it is not to be borne, my friends, to be derided by one's enemies. Let things take their course; what gain is it to me to live longer? I have neither country, nor house, nor refuge from my ills. Then erred I, when I left my father's house, persuaded by the words of a Grecian man, who with the will of the Gods shall suffer punishment from me. For neither shall he ever hereafter behold the children he had by me alive, nor shall he raise a child by his new wedded wife, since it is fated that the wretch should wretchedly perish by my spells. Let no one think me mean-spirited and weak, nor of a gentle temper, but of a contrary disposition, to my foes relentless, and to my friends kind: for the lives of such sort are most glorious.

princess, which he, having forsaken me, has contracted, are both advantageous and well determined on." So also Dind. but καλως ἔχει. Porson omits the line.

[1] In Elmsley this line is omitted, and instead of it is inserted

"νύμφῃ φέροντας, τήνδε μὴ φεύγειν χθόνα."

"*offering them to the bride, that they may not be banished from this country,*" which Dindorf retains, and brackets the other.

CHOR. Since thou hast communicated this plan to me, desirous both of doing good to thee, and assisting the laws of mortals, I dissuade thee from doing this.

MED. It can not be otherwise, but it is pardonable in thee to say this, not suffering the cruel treatment that I do.

CHOR. But wilt thou dare to slay thy two sons, O lady?

MED. For in this way will my husband be most afflicted.

CHOR. But thou at least wilt be the most wretched woman.

MED. Be that as it may: all intervening words are superfluous; but go, hasten, and bring Jason hither; for I make use of thee in all matters of trust. And thou wilt mention nothing of the plans determined on by me, if at least thou meanest well to thy mistress, and art a woman.

CHOR. The Athenians happy of old, and the descendants of the blessed Gods, feeding on the most exalted wisdom of a country sacred and unconquered, always tripping elegantly through the purest atmosphere, where they say that of old the golden-haired Harmonia gave birth to the chaste nine Pierian Muses.[1] And they report also that Venus drawing in her breath from the stream of the fair-flowing Cephisus, breathed over their country gentle sweetly-breathing gales of air; and always entwining in her hair the fragrant wreath of roses, sends the loves as assessors to wisdom; the assistants of every virtue. How then will the city of hallowed rivers,[2] or the country which conducts thee to friends, re-

[1] Although the Scholiast reprobates this interpretation, it seems to be the best, nor is it any objection, that Μνημοσύνη is elsewhere represented as the Mother of the Muses; so much at variance is the poetry of Euripides with the received mythology of the ancients.—ELMSLEY.

[2] The construction is πόλις ἱερῶν ποταμῶν; thus Thebes, Phœnis. l. 831, is called πύργος διδύμων ποταμῶν. A like expression occurs in 2 Sam. xii. 27. I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken *the city of waters*, πόλιν τῶν ὑδάτων in the Septuagint version.

ceive the murderer of her children, the unholy one! Consider in conjunction with others of the slaughter of thy children, consider what a murder thou wilt undertake. Do not by thy knees, by every plea,[1] by every prayer, we entreat you, do not murder your children; but how wilt thou acquire confidence either of mind or hand or in heart against thy children, attempting a dreadful deed of boldness? But how, having darted thine eyes upon thy children, wilt thou endure the perpetration of the murder without tears? Thou wilt not[2] be able, when thy children fall suppliant at thy feet, to imbrue thy savage hand in their wretched life-blood.

JASON, MEDEA, CHORUS.

JAS. I am come, by thee requested; for although thou art enraged, thou shalt not be deprived of this at least; but I will hear what new service thou dost desire of me, lady.

MED. Jason, I entreat you to be forgiving of what has been said, but right is it that you should bear with my anger, since many friendly acts have been done by us two. But I reasoned with myself and rebuked myself; wayward woman, why am I maddened and am enraged with those who consult well for me? and why am I in enmity with the princes of the land and with my husband, who is acting in the most advantageous manner for us, having married a princess, and begetting brothers to my children? Shall I not cease from my rage? What injury do I suffer, the Gods providing well for me? Have I not children? And I know that I am flying the country, and am in want of friends. Revolving this in my mind I perceive that I had much imprudence, and was enraged without reason. Now then I

[1] Elmsley reads *πάντες*, "*we all entreat thee.*" So Dindorf.
[2] Elmsley reads *ἦ δυνάσει* with the note of interrogation after *θυμῷ*; "*or how wilt thou be able,*" etc.

approve of this, and thou appearest to me to be prudent, having added this alliance to us; but I was foolish, who ought to share in these plans, and to join in adorning and to stand by the bed, and to delight with thee that thy bride was enamored of thee; but we women are as we are, I will not speak evil of the sex; wherefore it is not right that you should put yourself on an equality with the evil, nor repay folly for folly. I give up, and say that then I erred in judgment, but now I have determined on these things better. O my children, my children, come forth, leave the house, come forth, salute, and address your father with me, and be reconciled to your friends from your former hatred together with your mother. For there is amity between us, and my rage hath ceased. Take his right hand. Alas! my misfortunes; how I feel some hidden ill in my mind! Will ye, my children, in this manner, and for a long time enjoying life, stretch out your dear hands? Wretch that I am! how near am I to weeping and full of fear!—But at last canceling this dispute with your father, I have filled thus my tender sight with tears.

CHOR. In my eyes also the moist tear is arisen; and may not the evil advance to a greater height than it is at present.

JAS. I approve of this, lady, nor do I blame the past; for it is reasonable that the female sex be enraged with a husband who barters them for another union.—But thy heart has changed to the more proper side, and thou hast discovered, but after some time, the better counsel: these are the actions of a wise woman. But for you, my sons, your father not without thought hath formed many provident plans, with the assistance of the Gods. For I think that you will be yet the first in this Corinthian country, together with your brothers. But advance and prosper: and the rest

your father, and whatever God is propitious, will effect. And may I behold you blooming arrive at the prime of youth, superior to my enemies. And thou, why dost thou bedew thine eyes with the moist tear, having turned aside thy white cheek, and why dost thou not receive these words from me with pleasure?

MED. It is nothing. I was thinking of my sons.

JAS. Be of good conrage; for I will arrange well for them.

MED. I will be so, I will not mistrust thy words; but a woman is of soft mould, and was born to tears.

JAS. Why, I pray, dost thou so grieve for thy children?

MED. I brought them into the world, and when thou wert praying that thy children might live, a feeling of pity came upon me if that would be. But for what cause thou hast come to a conference with me, partly hath been explained, but the other reasons I will mention. Since it appeareth fit to the royal family to send me from this country, for me also this appears best, I know it well, that I might not dwell here, a check either to thee or to the princes of the land; for I seem to be an object of enmity to the house; I indeed will set out from this land in flight; but to the end that the children may be brought up by thy hand, entreat Creon that they may not leave this land.

JAS. I know not whether I shall persuade him; but it is right to try.

MED. But do thou then exhort thy bride to ask her father, that my children may not leave this country.

JAS. Certainly I will, and I think at least that she will persuade him, if indeed she be one of the female sex.

MED. I also will assist you in this task, for I will send to her presents which (I well know) far surpass in beauty any now among men, both a fine-wrought robe, and a golden-

twined chaplet, my sons carrying them. But as quick as possible let one of my attendants bring hither these ornaments. Thy bride shall be blessed not in one instance, but in many, having met with you at least the best of husbands, and possessing ornaments which the sun my father's father once gave to his descendants. Take these nuptial presents, my sons, in your hands, and bear and present them to the blessed royal bride; she shall receive gifts not indeed to be despised.

Jas. Why, O fond woman, dost thou rob thy hands of these; thinkest thou that the royal palace is in want of vests? in want of gold? keep these presents, give them not away; for if the lady esteems me of any value, she will prefer pleasing me to riches, I know full well.

Med. But do not oppose me; gifts, they say, persuade even the Gods,[1] and gold is more powerful than a thousand arguments to men. Hers is fortune, her substance the God now increases, she in youth governs all. But the sentence of banishment on my children I would buy off with my life, not with gold alone. But my children, enter you the wealthy palace, to the new bride of your father, and my mistress, entreat her, beseech her, that you may not leave the land, presenting these ornaments; but this is of the greatest consequence, that she receive these gifts in her own hand. Go as quick as possible, and may you be bearers of good tidings to your mother, in what she desires to obtain, having succeeded favorably.

Chor. Now no longer have I any hope of life for the children, no longer [is there hope]: for already are they going

[1] An allusion to that well-known saying in Plato, de Repub. l. 3. Δῶρα θεοὺς πείθει, δῶρ' αἰδοίους βασιλῆας. Ovid de Arte Am. iii. 635.

Munera, crede mihi, capiunt hominesque deosque.

to death. The bride shall receive the destructive present of the golden chaplet, she wretched shall receive them, and around her golden tresses shall she place the attire of death, having received the presents in her hands. The beauty and the divine glitter of the robe will persuade her to place around her head the golden-wrought chaplet. Already with the dead shall the bride be adorned; into such a net will she fall, and such a destiny will she, hapless woman, meet with; nor will she escape her fate. But thou, oh unhappy man! oh wretched bridegroom! son-in-law of princes, unknowingly thou bringest on thy children destruction, and on thy wife a bitter death; hapless man, how much art thou fallen from thy state![1] But I lament for thy grief, O wretch, mother of these children, who wilt murder thy sons on account of a bridal-bed; deserting which, in defiance of thee, thy husband dwells with another wife.

TUTOR, MEDEA, CHORUS.

TUT. Thy sons, my mistress, are reprieved from banishment, and the royal bride received thy presents in her hands with pleasure, and hence is peace to thy children.

MED. Ah!

TUT. Why dost thou stand in confusion, when thou art fortunate?

MED. Alas! alas!

TUT. This behavior is not consonant with the message I have brought thee.

MED. Alas! again.

TUT. Have I reported any ill fortune unknowingly, and have I failed in my hope of being the messenger of good?

[1] Vertit Portus, *O infelix quantam calamitatem ignoras.* Mihi sensus videtur esse, *quantum a pristina fortuna excidisti.* ELMSLEY.

MED. Thou hast said what thou hast said, I blame not thee.

TUT. Why then dost thou bend down thine eye, and shed tears?

MED. Strong necessity compels me, O aged man, for this the Gods and I deliberating ill have contrived.

TUT. Be of good courage; thou also wilt return home yet through thy children.

MED. Others first will I send to their home,[1] O wretched me!

TUT. Thou art not the only one who art separated from thy children; it behooves a mortal to bear calamities with meekness.

MED. I will do so; but go within the house, and prepare for the children what is needful for the day. O my sons, my sons, you have indeed a city, and a house, in which having forsaken me miserable, you shall dwell, ever deprived of a mother. But I am now going an exile into a foreign land, before I could have delight in you, and see you flourishing, before I could adorn your marriage, and wife, and nuptial-bed, and hold up the torch.[2] O unfortunate woman that I am, on account of my wayward temper. In vain then, my children, have I brought you up, in vain have I toiled, and been consumed with cares, suffering the strong agonies of child-bearing. Surely once there was a time when I hapless woman had many hopes in you, that you would both tend me in my age, and when dead would with your hands decently

[1] Medea here makes use of the ambiguous word *κατάξω*, which may be understood by the Tutor in the sense of "bringing back to their country," but implies also the horrid purpose of destroying her children: *τόδε 'κοτάξω' ἀντὶ τοῦ πέμψω εἰς τὸν Ἅιδην*, as the Scholiast explains it.

[2] It was the custom for mothers to bear lighted torches at their children's nuptials. See Iphig. Aul. l. 372.

compose my limbs, a thing desired by men. But now this pleasing thought hath indeed perished ; for deprived of you I shall pass a life of misery, and bitter to myself. But you will no longer behold your mother with your dear eyes, having passed into another state of life. Alas ! alas ! why do you look upon me with your eyes, my children? Why do ye smile that last smile? Alas ! alas ! what shall I do? for my heart is sinking. Ye females, when I behold the cheerful look of my children, I have no power. Farewell my counsels : I will take my children with me from this land. What does it avail me grieving their father with the ills of these, to acquire twice as much pain for myself? never will I at least do this. Farewell my counsels. And yet what do I suffer? do I wish to incur ridicule, having left my foes unpunished? This must be dared. But the bringing forward words of tenderness in my mind arises also from my cowardice. Go, my children, into the house ; and he for whom it is not lawful to be present at my sacrifice, let him take care himself to keep away.[1] But I will not stain my hand. Alas ! alas ! do not thou then, my soul, do not thou at least perpetrate this. Let them escape, thou wretch, spare thy sons. There shall they live with us and delight thee. No, I swear by the infernal deities who dwell with Pluto, never shall this be, that I will give up my children to be insulted by my enemies. [At all events they must die, and since they must, I who brought them into the world will perpetrate the deed.] This is fully determined by fate, and shall not pass away. And now the chaplet is on her head, and the bride is perishing in the robes ; of this I am well assured. But, since I am now going a most dismal path, and

[1] *ὕτῳ δὲ φησὶν οὐκ εὐσεβὲς φαίνεταί παρεῖναι τῷ φόνῳ, καὶ δέχεσθαι τοιαύτας θυσίας, οὗτος ἀπότω.—τῷ δὲ αὐτῷ μελήσει συναπτέον τὸ μὴ παρεῖναι.* SCHOL.

these will I send by one still more dismal, I desire to address my children: give, my sons, give thy right hand for thy mother to kiss. O most dear hand, and those lips dearest to me, and that form and noble countenance of my children, be ye blessed, but there;[1] for every thing here your father hath taken away. O the sweet embrace, and that soft skin, and that most fragrant breath of my children. Go, go; no longer am I able to look upon you, but am overcome by my ills. I know indeed the ills that I am about to dare, but my rage is master of my counsels;[2] which is indeed the cause of the greatest calamities to men.

CHOR. Already have I often gone through more refined reasonings, and have come to greater arguments than suits the female mind to investigate; for we also have a muse, which dwelleth with us, for the sake of teaching wisdom; but not with all, for haply thou wilt find but a small number of the race of women out of many not ungifted with the muse.[3] And I say that those men who are entirely free from wedlock, and have not begotten children, surpass in happiness those who have families; those indeed who are childless, through inexperience whether children are born a joy or anguish to men, not having them themselves, are exempt from much misery. But those who have a sweet blooming offspring of children in their house, I behold worn

[1] *But there;* that is, in the regions below.

[2] Ovid. Metamorph. vii. 20.

Video meliora proboque,
Deteriora sequor.

[3] Elmsley reads

παῦρον δὲ γένος (μίαν ἐν πολλαῖς
εὑροις ἂν ἴσως)
οὐκ, κ. τ. λ.

"*But a small number of the race of women (you may perchance find one among many) not ungifted with the muse.*"

with care the whole time; first of all how they shall bring them up honorably, and how they shall leave means of sustenance for their children. And still after this, whether they are toiling for bad or good sons, this is still in darkness. But one ill to mortals, the last of all, I now will mention. For suppose they have both found sufficient store, and the bodies of their children have arrived at manhood, and that they are good; but if this fortune shall happen to them, death, bearing away their sons, vanishes with them to the shades of darkness. How then does it profit that the Gods heap on mortals yet this grief in addition to others, the most bitter of all, for the sake of children?

MEDEA, MESSENGER, CHORUS.

MED. For a long time waiting for the event, my friends, I am anxiously expecting what will be the result thence. And I see indeed one of the domestics of Jason coming hither, and his quickened breath shows that he will be the messenger of some new ill.

MESS. O thou that hast impiously perpetrated a deed of terror, Medea, fly, fly, leaving neither the ocean, chariot,[1] nor the car whirling o'er the plain.

MED. But what is done that requires this flight?

MESS. The princess is just dead, and Creon her father destroyed by thy charms.

MED. Thou hast spoken most glad tidings: and hereafter from this time shalt thou be among my benefactors and friends.

MESS. What sayest thou? Art thou in thy senses, and not mad, lady? who having destroyed the king and family, rejoicest at hearing it, and fearest not such things?

[1] A similar expression is found in Iphig. Taur. v. 410, *νώτον δχημα*. A ship is frequently called *ἅρμα θαλάσσης*: so Virgil, Æn. vi. Classique immittit habenas.

MED. I also have something to say to these words of thine at least; but be not hasty, my friend; but tell me how they perished, for twice as much delight wilt thou give me if they died miserably.

MESS. As soon as thy two sons were come with their father, and had entered the bridal house, we servants, who were grieved at thy misfortunes, were delighted; and immediately there was much conversation in our ears, that thy husband and thou had brought the former quarrel to a friendly termination. One kissed the hand, another the auburn head of thy sons, and I also myself followed with them to the women's apartments through joy. But my mistress, whom we now reverence instead of thee, before she saw thy two sons enter, held her cheerful eyes fixed on Jason; afterward however she covered her eyes, and turned aside her white cheek, disgusted at the entrance of thy sons; but thy husband quelled the anger and rage of the young bride, saying this: Be not angry with thy friends, but cease from thy rage, and turn again thy face, esteeming those as friends, whom thy husband does. But receive the gifts, and ask thy father to give up the sentence of banishment against these children for my sake. But when she saw the ornaments, she refused not, but promised her husband every thing; and before thy sons and their father were gone far from the house, she took and put on the variegated robes, and having placed the golden chaplet around her tresses she arranges her hair in the radiant mirror, smiling at the lifeless image of her person. And after, having risen from her seat, she goes across the chamber, elegantly tripping with snow-white foot; rejoicing greatly in the presents, looking much and oftentimes with her eyes on her outstretched neck.[1] After that however there was a sight of horror to behold.

[1] Elmsley is of opinion that *the instep* and not *the neck* is meant by τένων.

For having changed color, she goes staggering back trembling in her limbs, and is scarce in time to prevent herself from falling on the ground, by sinking into a chair. And some aged female attendant, when she thought that the wrath either of Pan or some other Deity[1] had visited her, offered up the invocation, before at least she sees the white foam bursting from her mouth, and her mistress rolling her eyeballs from their sockets and the blood no longer in the flesh; then she sent forth a loud shriek of far different sound from the strain of supplication; and straightway one rushed to the apartments of her father, but another to her newly-married husband, to tell the calamity befallen the bride, and all the house was filled with frequent hurryings to and fro. And by this time a swift runner, exerting his limbs, might have reached[2] the goal of the course of six plethra;[3] but she, wretched woman, from being speechless, and from a closed eye having groaned deeply writhed in agony, for a double pest was warring against her. The golden chaplet indeed placed on her head was sending forth a stream of all-devouring fire wonderful to behold, but the fine-wrought robes, the presents of thy sons, were devouring the white flesh of the

[1] The ancients attributed all sudden terrors, and sudden sicknesses, such as epilepsies, for which no cause appeared, to Pan, or to some other Deity. The anger of the God they endeavored to avert by a hymn, which had the nature of a charm.

[2] Elmsley has *ἀνθῆπτετο*, which is the old reading: this makes no difference in the construing or the construction, as, in the line before, he reads *ἄν ἔλκων*, where Porson has *ἀνέλκων*.

[3] The space of time elapsed is meant to be marked by this circumstance. MUSGRAVE. PORSON. Thus we find in M of the Odyssey, l. 439, the time of day expressed by the rising of the judges; in Δ of the Iliad, l. 86, by the dining of the woodman. When we recollect that the ancients had not the inventions that we have whereby to measure their time, we shall cease to consider the circumlocution as absurd or out of place.

hapless woman. But she having started from her seat flies, all on fire, tossing her hair and head on this side and that side, desirous of shaking off the chaplet; but the golden wreath firmly kept its hold; but the fire, when she shook her hair, blazed out with double fury, and she sinks upon the ground overcome by her sufferings, difficult for any one except her father to recognize. For neither was the expression of her eyes clear, nor her noble countenance; but the blood was dropping from the top of her head mixed with fire. But her flesh was dropping off her bones, as the tear from the pine-tree, by the hidden fangs of the poison; a sight of horror. But all feared to touch the body, for we had her fate to warn us. But the hapless father, through ignorance of her suffering, having come with haste into the apartment, falls on the corpse, and groans immediately; and having folded his arms round her, kisses her, saying these words: O miserable child, what Deity hath thus cruelly destroyed thee? who makes an aged father bowing to the tomb[1] bereaved of thee? Alas! me! let me die with thee, my child. But after he had ceased from his lamentations and cries, desiring to raise his aged body, he was held, as the ivy by the boughs of the laurel, by the fine-wrought robes; and dreadful was the struggle, for he wished to raise his knee, but she held him back; but if he drew himself away by force he tore the aged flesh from his bones. But at length the wretched man swooned away, and gave up his life; for no longer was he able to endure the agony. But they lie corses, the daughter and aged father near one another; a calamity that demands tears. Aud let thy affairs indeed be not matter for my words; for

[1] The same expression occurs in the Heraclidæ, l. 168. The Scholiast explains it thus: *τυμβογέροντα, τὸν πλησίον θανάτου ὄντα· τύμβους δὲ καλοῦσι τοὺς γέροντας, παρόσον πλησίον εἰσὶ τοῦ θανάτου καὶ τοῦ τάφου.*

thou thyself wilt know a refuge from punishment. But the affairs of mortals not now for the first time I deem a shadow, and I would venture to say that those persons who seem to be wise and are researchers of arguments, these I say, run into the greatest folly. For no mortal man is happy; but wealth pouring in, one man may be more fortunate than another, but happy he can not be.

Chor. The Deity, it seems, will in this day justly heap on Jason a variety of ills. O hapless lady, how we pity thy sufferings, daughter of Creon, who art gone to the house of darkness, through thy marriage with Jason.

Med. The deed is determined on by me, my friends, to slay my children as soon as possible, and to hasten from this land; and not by delaying to give my sons for another hand more hostile to murder. But come, be armed, my heart; why do we delay to do dreadful but necessary deeds? Come, O wretched hand of mine, grasp the sword, grasp it, advance to the bitter goal of life, and be not cowardly, nor remember thy children how dear they are, how thou broughtest them into the world; but for this short day at least forget thy children; hereafter lament. For although thou slayest them, nevertheless they at least were dear, but I a wretched woman.

Chor. O thou earth, and thou all-illuming beam of the sun, look down upon, behold this abandoned woman, before she move her blood-stained hand itself about to inflict the blow against her children; for from thy golden race they sprung; but fearful is it for the blood of Gods to fall by the hand of man. But do thou, O heaven-born light, restrain her, stop her, remove from this house this blood-stained and miserable Erinnys agitated by the Furies. The care of thy children perishes in vain, and in vain hast thou produced a dear race, O thou who didst leave the most inhospitable entrance

of the Cyanean rocks, the Symplegades. Hapless woman, why does such grievous rage settle on thy mind; and hostile slaughter ensue? For kindred pollutions are difficult of purification to mortals; correspondent calamities falling from the Gods to the earth upon the houses of the murderers.[1]

First Son. (*within*) Alas! what shall I do? whither shall I fly from my mother's hand?

Second Son. I know not, dearest brother, for we perish.

Chor. Hearest thou the cry? hearest thou the children? O wretch, O ill-fated woman! Shall I enter the house? It seems right to me to ward off the murderous blow from the children.

Sons. Nay, by the Gods assist us, for it is in needful time; since now at least are we near the destruction of the sword.

Chor. Miserable woman, art thou then a rock, or iron, who cuttest down with death by thine own hand the fair crop of children which thou producedst thyself? one indeed I hear of, one woman of those of old, who laid violent hands on her children, Ino, maddened by the Gods when the wife of Jove sent her in banishment from her home; and she miserable woman falls into the sea through the impious murder of her children, directing her foot over the sea-shore, and dying with her two sons, there she perished! what then I pray can be more dreadful than this? O thou bed of woman, fruitful in ills, how many evils hast thou already brought to men!

Jason, Chorus.

Jas. Ye females, who stand near this mansion, is she who hath done these deeds of horror, Medea, in this house; or

[1] αὐτοφόνταις may be taken as an adjective to agree with δόμοις, or the construction may be ἄχη πίτνοντα αὐτοφόνταις ἐπὶ δόμοις, in the same manner as λίθος ἔπεσέ μοι ἐπὶ κεφαλῇ. Elmsley.

hath she withdrawn herself in flight? For now it is necessary for her either to be hidden beneath the earth, or to raise her winged body into the vast expanse of air, if she would not suffer vengeance from the king's house. Does she trust that after having slain the princes of this land, she shall herself escape from this house with impunity?—But I have not such care for her as for my children; for they whom she has injured will punish her. Bnt I came to preserve my children's life, lest [Creon's] relations by birth do any injury,[1] avenging the impious murder perpetrated by their mother.

CHOR. Unhappy man! thou knowest not at what misery thou hast arrived, Jason, or else thou wouldest not have uttered these words.

JAS. What is this, did she wish to slay me also?

CHOR. Thy children are dead by their mother's hand.

JAS. Alas me! What wilt thou say? how hast thou killed me, woman!

CHOR. Think now of thy sons as no longer living.

JAS. Where did she slay them, within or without the house?

CHOR. Open those doors, and thou wilt see the slaughter of thy sons.

JAS. Undo the bars, as quick as possible, attendants; unloose the hinges, that I may see this double evil, my sons slain, and may punish her.

MED. Why dost thou shake and unbolt these gates, seeking the dead and me who did the deed. Cease from this labor; but if thou wantest aught with me, speak if thou wishest any thing; but never shall thou touch me with thy

[1] *μή μέ τι δράσωσι'* had been "lest they do *me* any injury." Elmsley conceives that *νιν* is the true reading, which might easily have been corrupted into *μοι*.

hands; such a chariot the sun my father's father gives me, a defense from the hostile hand.[1]

JAS. O thou abomination! thou most detested woman, both by the Gods and by me, and by all the race of man; who hast dared to plunge the sword in thine own children, thou who bore them, and hast destroyed me childless. And having done this thou beholdest both the sun and the earth, having dared a most impious deed. Mayest thou perish! but I am now wise, not being so then when I brought thee from thy house and from a foreign land to a Grecian habitation, a great pest, traitress to thy father and the land that nurtured thee. But the Gods have sent thy evil genius on me. For having slain thy brother at the altar, thou embarkedst on board the gallant vessel Argo. Thou begannest indeed with such deeds as these; and being wedded to me, and bearing me children, thou hast destroyed them on account of another bed and marriage. There is not one Grecian woman who would have dared a deed like this, in preference to whom at least, I thought worthy to wed thee, an alliance hateful and destructive to me, a lioness, no woman, having a nature more savage than the Tuscan Scylla. But I can not gall thy heart with ten thousand reproaches, such shameless confidence is implanted in thee. Go, thou worker of ill, and stained with the blood of thy children. But for me it remains to bewail my fate, who shall neither enjoy my new nuptials, nor shall I have it in my power to address while alive my sons whom I begot and educated, but I have lost them.

[1] Here Medea appears above in a chariot drawn by dragons, bearing with her the bodies of her slaughtered sons. SCHOL. See HORACE, Epod. 3.

Hoc delibutis ulta donis pellicem,
Serpente fugit alite.

MED. Surely I could make long reply to these words, if the Sire Jupiter did not know what treatment thou receivedst from me, and what thou didst in return; but you were mistaken, when you expected, having dishonored my bed, to lead a life of pleasure, mocking me, and so was the princess, and so was Creon, who proposed the match to thee, when he expected to drive me from this land with impunity. Wherefore, if thou wilt, call me lioness, and Scylla who dwelt in the Tuscan plain. For thy heart, as is right, I have wounded.

JAS. And thou thyself grievest at least, and art a sharer in these ills.

MED. Be assured of that; but this lessens[1] the grief, that thou canst not mock me.

JAS. My children, what a wicked mother have ye found!

MED. My sons, how did ye perish by your father's fault!

JAS. Nevertheless my hand slew them not.

MED. But injury, and thy new nuptials.

JAS. And on account of thy bed didst thou think fit to slay them?

MED. Dost thou deem this a slight evil to a woman?

JAS. Whoever at least is modest; but in thee is every ill.

MED. These are no longer living, for this will gall thee.

JAS. These are living, alas me! avenging furies on thy head.

MED. The Gods know who began the injury.

JAS. They know indeed thy execrable mind.

MED. Thou art hateful to me, and I detest thy bitter speech.

JAS. And I in sooth thine; the separation at least is without pain.

[1] λύει may also be interpreted, with the Scholiast, in the sense of λυσιτελεῖ, "the grief delights me." The translation given in the text is proposed by Porson, and approved of by Elmsley.

MED. How then? what shall I do? for I also am very desirous.

JAS. Suffer me, I beg, to bury and mourn over these dead bodies.

MED. Never indeed; since I will bury them with this hand bearing them to the shrine of Juno, the Goddess guardian of the citadel, that no one of my enemies may insult them, tearing up their graves. But in this land of Sisyphus will I institute in addition to this a solemn festival and sacrifices hereafter to expiate this unhallowed murder. But I myself will go to the land of Erectheus, to dwell with Ægeus son of Pandion. But thou, wretch, as is fit, shalt die wretchedly, struck on thy head with a relic of thy ship Argo, having seen the bitter end of my marriage.

JAS. But may the Fury of the children, and Justice the avenger of murder, destroy thee.

MED. But what God or Deity hears thee, thou perjured man, and traitor to the rights of hospitality?

JAS. Ah! thou abominable woman, and murderer of thy children.

MED. Go to thy home, and bury thy wife.

JAS. I go, even deprived of both my children.

MED. Thou dost not yet mourn enough: stay and grow old.[1]

JAS. Oh my dearest sons!

MED. To their mother at least, but not to thee.

JAS. And yet thou slewest them.

MED. To grieve thee.

JAS. Alas, Alas! I hapless man long to kiss the dear mouths of my children.

[1] Elmsley has
μένε καὶ γῆρας.
"*Stay yet for old age.*" So also Dindorf.

MED. Now thou addressest, now salutest them, formerly rejecting them with scorn.

JAS. Grant me, by the Gods, to touch the soft skin of my sons.

MED. It is not possible. Thy words are thrown away in vain.

JAS. Dost thou hear this, O Jove, how I am rejected, and what I suffer from this accursed and child-destroying lioness? But as much indeed as is in my power and I am able, I lament and mourn over these; calling the Gods to witness, that having slain my children, thou preventest me from touching them with my hands, and from burying the bodies, whom, oh that I had never begotten, and seen them thus destroyed by thee.

CHOR. Jove is the dispenser of various fates in heaven, and the Gods perform many things contrary to our expectations, and those things which we looked for are not accomplished; but the God hath brought to pass things unthought of. In such manner hath this affair ended.

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DAVID McKAY, Publisher, Philadelphia.

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